POEMS of

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> W. D. ALBRIGHT 1881 - 1946

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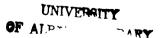
PREFACE

The unavoidable delay in the preparation of this little booklet is very much regretted by the family but it is now being presented with their goodwill and good wishes as a memento to friends and former associates of the author.

> Box 445 Beaverlodge, Alta.

His Motto

"It is a pleasure as well as a duty to serve."





W. D. ALBRIGHT 1881 - 1946

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ATONEMENT

(Dedicated to the memory of his brother, the late F. S. Albright, B. A., of Calgary, who fell at Passchendaele, October 26, 1917, as a private in the ranks of the C. E. F.)

A little lad, he played about the farm,
Gentle and gently bred, the scion of God-fearing country
folk,
No British blood they claimed; German and Swiss

And Holland-Dutch they owned,
Although Canadian-bred for several generations,
Save for the father's mother, who, of Prussian birth,
Had come to Canada a little girl and taught
Her children and grandchildren to revere
The Fatherland: had trained them gently
And had sung the fine old German melodies,
The rhythmic songs and folk lore of the Rhine,
Instilling something of the love she felt
And cherished for her kin.

Yet good Canadians they always were, Schooled in the lore of British history And all the age-long legacy of British thought, Inheritors of Magna Charta and of true Canadian democracy; British to the core.

Teuton and Saxon comrades was the theme; Blucher and Wellington were in proud memory twinned. Blood that flows rich and free Forswears allegiance but reluctantly; True-hearted patriots hold the old land dear.

When war broke out he was in Britain's capital Upon his wedding tour. There at the world's metropolis He felt the full, strong beat of British purpose; Attended service in Westminster Abbey And was stirred with pride to note The strong, devout and quiet temper Of the race of England.

ATONEMENT - (Cont'd)

Returned to Canada; resumed his practice,
A rising lawyer in a Western town,
With brilliant future beckoning in his profession
And perchance in public life.
Early he grasped the import of the struggle;
Foresaw the prospect of a universal call;
And, though repugnant was the soldier's life,
The thought of carnage and the lust of strife,
The awful hell of war as waged today,
He soon resolved to go.
But his associates, short-manned by many volunteer
enlistments,
Were doubly loath to lose his services.
Yet all the while he felt the call of duty.

The rape of Begium, Serbia's cruel fate,
The Lusitania crime, Nurse Cavell's death
Were stunning blows. To think that Germany
Should thus defile her honor! This cannot be
Peace-loving Germany our fathers knew.
These are demented people, military-mad,
Drunk with Ambition, assuming Might is Right,
And supplementing Might with cunning and intrigue.
This menace to the world must be subdued
By free men's blood, else Freedom perish,
Trampled 'neath the Junker's iron heel.

And so not British birth nor German heart Impelled him to the fray. It was a larger aim Than any country. The pulse of human brotherhood Of justice, honor, truth beat through his veins, The cosmic soul of Universe, that breaks down prejudice And will some day sweep away The artificial bounds of Empire and of State And will unite the world In one grand bond of brotherhood In civilization's cause.

ATONEMENT - (Cont'd)

Enlisted in a Western regiment, with private rank, A splendid factor in recruiting his battalion, Promoted soon to sergeancy. Reverted that he might More promptly draft to France to fill a gap In Canada's depleted ranks. He fell in Flanders, killed at Passchendaele In his first action. All one man could he did To fight the fight for human liberty, Atone for Germany's atrocious crimes And make the world safe for democracy. He gave his Teuton blood to save the world From Prussianism. Could Frank or Celt do more?

He fell in Flanders, but his memory lives
Resplendent in ten thousand loving hearts,
For none who knew him but admired the man,
His sterling character and nature true,
And many knew the kindness of his heart
By concrete acts. In life respected;
Honored in his death; atoned the honor
Of the race from which he sprang.
Praise God, not all is perfidy!

O Canada, remember well and heed;
Not all your blue blood runs through Saxon veins;
Not all high purpose crowns the Allies' cause.
Within the German heart there dwells
A soul that yet shall live, when,
Chastened by the introspection of defeat,
The common people come into their own,
Their autocratic tyranny dethrone,
The military mania disown,
And Wilson's words become of present tense.

ATONEMENT - (Cont'd)

O Germany, behold the light of truth;
The genius of British liberty, that grants dominions freedom,
Cements them in a firm, unflinching aim
To fight for Freedom. E'en her alien-bred,
Upon whose aid you counted, not all prove traitors,
For not a few join hands to war against autocracy.
Legions may dash their columns 'gainst the ranks
Of freemen but in vain! The thin red line,
Now khaki-clad, is valiant as of yore.
The God of battles fights on Freedom's side.

A SONG OF THE NORTH FRONTIER

Sing me a song of the open spaces, The broad white plains and the hardy races, With buoyant hopes and with strong-set faces, Peopling the Northern Land.

Sing me a song of her fertile acres, Whose breadstuffs gladden the world's best bakers; A tribute of praise to the brave home makers, Holding the last frontier.

Sing me a song of her mountain rivers, Whose cutbanks yawn where the aspen quivers. They rise in the hills where the avalanche shivers --Thousand-league tides to the sea.

Sing me a song of her vast resources, Of mines exposed where the river courses --Petroleum, coal and hydraulic forces, Gifts of the ages past.

Sing me a song of the pluck and daring
Of pioneers o'er the long trails faring.
For theirs is the breed that defies despairing -Shock troops of the North Frontier!

THE RAILROAD COMES AT LAST

It comes! The steel-railed highway comes!
Each day brings on the engine's belching steam;
The hammers clanging as on iron drums;
The bridgers spanning here and there a stream;
The work-train crawling on the track fresh laid;
The ballast crew that follows down the line;
The teamsters stringing ties along the grade,
Where keening air intoxicates like wine.
In teeth of winter blast,
The railroad comes at last!

How much it means no one can know but those
Who, twenty years ago, have trod the trails
In stinging winter cold, where North wind blows,
While runners screeched on frost that gripped like rails,
And oxen humped their backs and dragged their stride,
And shiv'ring drivers, roused from early bed,
Trudged after sleighs and wished themselves inside
The steaming hut of "stopping-place" ahead.

How much it means they only too well know
Who've teamed their grain to steel-head points, adown
Through fifty miles of wind-swept tracks of snow;
Hauled loads of squealing swine to distant town;
Or travelled far to catch the early train;
Or sent their children off to city school;
Or seen a mother travail in her pain,
Remote from doctor, nurse or hospital.

How much it means few know so well as they
Who, plying Parliament and Capital,
Have labored year by year and day by day
To 'fuse the faith of those who risked their all
To prove a virgin land. What slow response, alack,
To recognize a demonstrated fact!
How many years of waiting for the track!

THE RAILROAD COMES AT LAST - (Cont'd)

How slow to implement the implied pact, With settler foll'wing up surveyor's lap, And rolling back the agricultural map!

Hope chilled to doubt, and thousands drifted out,
Persuaded that, within their span of life,
Poor prospect boded for a changed lookout;
Scant action came of promises so rife.
The while we canvassed immigrants abroad,
Our life blood trickled to a neighbor's land.
Our right hand rested while our left employed
In towing settlers with a rope of sand.

It comes at last! The Ir'n Horse puffs his way
Through rolling park and open prairie land
To newborn towns, presaging brighter day.
Tall elevators rise on every hand;
Stores, churches, schools upspring in glad array;
Black belts of breaking mark the settlers' zeal;
Good homes attest the people plan to stay.
The day is won; development is real.
Hope's Harbinger wings up the right of way.

Beaverlodge, Alberta, November 20th, 1928

UNTITLED

There is music in the whistle of a train -Of a booming locomotive on the plain -Bidding men to haul their grain,
Blowing yet and yet again,
Booming bassly o'er the bounding prairie main.

There is magic in the rumble of its roar And it draws the cheerful settler to the door. Hark! the weary wait is o'er! Hesitation is no more. Hear it thunder as we did in days of yore.

There is beauty in the belching of the steam
As the engine climbs the grade of yonder stream.
And at night, when headlights gleam
And the Pullman windows gleam,
All becomes the form incarnate of a dream.

There is drama in the coming of the steel, Drama that we fain express but rather feel. Oh! for Singer's vibrant peal Or the Poet's passioned zeal Or for Painter to portray the strong appeal.

A FEBRUARY MORNING IN GRANDE PRAIRIE

A filmy haze suffuses softened light
Of February sun. The hoary frost
Clothes every bush and tree in sparkling white.
No breath of air has stirred the diamond-bossed
Rime-laden twigs. Frost-fretted strands of fence
In wavy undulations o'er the knolls
Of scintillating landscape vanish thence
In survey slash that slices through the knolls
Of poplar forest, crowning distant rise.

White-whiskered colts are pawing in the snow For casual heads of grain or stem-cured grass. The diamond snow-fields glisten. See yonder brilliant glow, A dazzling glint of sunlight on the glass Of window-panes a league or so away! The posing wreaths of pungent poplar smoke Are circling aimless on a lazy day. A coyote flits with silent, easy lope Adown a bluffy slope.

Nearby and friendly in the ambient haze
Bold Saskatoon uprears his beetling brow -Perchance a remnant of preglacial days -The feature of the prairie from whose prow
A million-acre farm rolls at one's feet,
While twenty lakes lie glistening in a main
Of billowy landscape. Vales and valleys meet -A panoramic spread of park and plain,
Breath-catching in its sweep.

Brown willow scrub delineates the "draws"
That wander zigzag down the long inclines
And fill in spring the rivers, when it thaws,
Which flow two thousand miles to Arctic brines.
The snow-patched fields reach far to east and west,
Falling away to spruce-lined streams and lakes.

A FEBRUARY MORNING IN GRANDE PRAIRIE - (Cont'd)

The poplar-dotted slope recedes to wooded crest, In dim horizon merging, where it takes The eye to Rocky peaks.

Limning the southward with a level band -His profile facing toward the setting sun -In purple distant slope Nose Mountain stands,
His face, almost due south, reminding one
Of Blomidon, a Bluenose counterpart.
A distant range of snow-clad Rocky piles,
From where this looming foothill lies athwart,
Encircles far to west -- one hundred miles
Of shimmering silhouette.

I've seen the sunrise dancing on those slopes Whose avalanches swell the summer streams. I've seen them when grey coldness blanched the hopes Of warmer days. I've seen them when no gleams Reflected from the range. A deep blue cast Portended strong Chinook (else rain or snow) As roaring through the gaps the West wind passed, The peaks an augury to the plains below -- Fair weather, cold or blow.

I've seen them when mirage uplifted hills
And raised horizons twice their actual height
With intervening valleys, lakes and rills -A panoply of Nature's imag'ry: a gay delight
Of fancied fortresses and gates and towers
And piles of masonry and columns white;
Of pyramids, cathedrals, arching bowers;
Like dreamland's city on a moonlit night -Illusion's masterpiece!

A FEBRUARY MORNING IN GRANDE PRAIRIE - (Cont'd)

Despair, O Pen, of picturing the scene; Confess, O Brush, thy pigment tints are pale; Concede, O Cinema, thou canst not hope to screen Such splendid sweep of mountain and of vale. No picture hanging on an artist's wall, No witchery of statue, song or tome, Can e'er compare with this inspiring thrall, This wondrous tapestry in Nature's home --Grand Prairie's majesty, in distance' chastening tone.

THE MESSAGE OF THE DUMB

A silver fox lay hungry, cold and numb, Gripped by a vise of steel, in anguish dumb. The trapper tarried in his cabin grey. "Too cold," he said, "to tramp the line to-day: "I'll wait and broil a moose-steak for a feed." Nor cared he that a silver fox should bleed In agony of cruel and dumb despair, To starve and perish in the Arctic air.

'Twas so much fur to him.

A flock of prairie chickens wheeled in sight: The sportsman's ready trigger checked their flight. Small chance to kill, he none the less took aim, Hoping, at least, a bird or two to maim. What recked he if a broken leg or wing Should cause a grouse to suffer winter's sting? Gloating, he told his triumph as he said, "I got none, but I tickled one with lead." 'Twas so much sport to him.

A bullock, gored and shiv'ring in a load Of cattle, storm-bound on a Western road, Half-starved and thirsty, cowed with nameless dread. Exposed his flanks, to blizzards -- not a bed To lie on. Dragged the agony of miles Without diversion, by which man beguiles The weary hours. All this in order that Stout men might grease their palates with his fat.

'Twere so much beef to them.

A freighter's four-up struggled with their load, Sleigh runners grinding on a gravelly road. The brutal teamster, sparing whip nor rein, Cursed, raved and lashed them, callous to their pain. Abused, o'er-strained, one sank to draw no more.

THE MESSAGE OF THE DUMB - (Cont'd)

Internal rupture was his ailment sore.
The frenzied driver kicked him there and swore,
Then made three haul a load too big for four.
'Twas so much freight to him.

A dog lay huddled at his master's door,
A bitter storm was raging o'er the moor.
Potatoes, crusts and hard-tack were his share,
The while the family dined on ample fare.
Affection held him; tremulous his lip,
Heart-hungry for humane companionship.
A kick his portion if he dared to whine;
A careless word his master's scanty sign.
'Twas just a dog to him.

It is not right; I cannot think it fair
That child or man should persecute a hare.
O Prisoner of War, who knows the gall
Of cruellest detainment beneath a guarded wall,
O man; who holds dominion over all -Controls the lives of creatures great and small -Show mercy to your faithful malamutes!
Humanity owes chivalry to brutes.

WILD FIRE

To clear some scrub, he laid a match to grass. (He did not hear those giddy whirlwinds pass.) It leapt his guard and smouldered in a peat, Biding its time, Man's enterprise to cheat.

It crept to bush and lit a forest mat; A gale arose to whip a wildfire that Sent searing flames through timber and through farm, Spreading terror, destruction and alarm.

It tore through lordly stands of merchant spruce; It jumped o'er rivers, deigning spell nor truce; It murked the sky with clouds of bitter smoke; It scorched a countryside before it broke.

For days the fighters tried to stem its rage; It mocked their efforts; challenged to engage In duel where Grim Death had awful stake; Men died because a fool made a mistake.

Who sets a careless fire, if each one Were held responsible for damage done, Forced to make good as best he could the loss, He would be careful where a match he tossed.

If every smoker watched his butts and ash; Were careful not to smoke mid tinder-trash; Were all precautions taken that we know, Lives would be spared, and property and woe.

PEACE RIVER "IF"

If you can keep a smile when all about you
The pouring rains are rotting all your hay,
While grain is sprouting in the oft-drenched bundles,
And cars mire daily on the King's Highway;

If you can watch your feed bins running empty, And find no chance to thresh a load of grain; Can see your fallow greening as a meadow, With weeds and grass throughout two months of rain;

If you can wade through barnyards miring deeper, And see the pigs convert their lots to mud; If you can feed a crew and get no work done, While every hope of fairing proves a dud;

If you can see the sun in broad effulgence Shine forth as if in promise of fair days, Then dodge behind a snowy cloud, repentant, While snow flakes hide his weak and yellow rays;

If you can see a summer's work dissolving, And face a winter minus feed or cash; Can still maintain the spirit of Thanksgiving, When every blessed prospect seems to crash;

If you can stand all this and keep your courage And cheer a fellow farmer to the end, Yours is the land and everything that's on it, And, what is more, you are a brick, my friend.

FROST FANTASY

A frosty fog has fallen through the night; This morn the willow withes are poised in white; The breathless breeze is waiting on its wings; A pause of peace and poetry it brings.

More dense in winter rime than summer leaves, The shelter belt in monkey puzzle weaves A feath'ry fantasy of fretted boughs; Entrancing beauty every bluff endows.

The grouse and grosbeak flit about the home. The netting stands as white-capped honeycomb. A diamond etching laces every wire. The hearts of all in ecstasy aspire.

January, 1936

Short Poems gleaned from "TIMELY HINTS", a weekly contribution to the local press

August 28, 1931

The Prairie Chicken's whistle Ushers in the harvest moon. Its plaintive call re-echoes Through the golden afternoon.

November 6, 1931

September's golden tints are past; October bids farewell at last; November binds the furrows fast 'Neath winter's snowy mantle vast.

Ah well, the changing seasons bring, Each in its turn, some cause to sing. Who quaileth not at Boreas' sting Enjoys the winter as the spring.

March 21, 1933

Grey skies and skirling clouds of white;
Filled trails and sleigh-tracks of great height;
Piled drifts, unbroken fields of snow;
Cold months and winter dragging slow.
'Twill not be always thus. The sun will shine,
The fields be bare; snow-melt seek Arctic brine.
The seeds will sprout, the birds again will sing.
Be cheerful, all, and ready for the spring!

March 28, 1933

Lakes of white fog in the valleys;
Glistening peaks on the rim;
Rose-tinted dawn to the eastward,
Mornings of brightness and vim.

WINTER ON THE FARM

November 10, 1933

The march of the seasons brings winter again; Jack Frost binds the streamlets of mountain and glen; A powder of white over forest and glen Pronounces a truce in the tillage of men.

The garden is lifted, the potatoes are stored; The settler has garnered his vegetable hoard. The threshing is done for which Heaven be thanked; The stables are mudded, the buildings are banked.

A long winter rest is the city man's dream Of farmer friends living on honey and cream. Reality's different, there's wood to be got, And hay to be hauled to the fat-cattle lot.

There's a spring to be opened or water to pump; Brief daylight keeps choremen quite well on the jump. The cows must be milked and the hogs must be fed, The chickens be tended, the horses be bed.

There's grain to be shipped and seed to be cleaned, And posts to be sharpened, and poles to be teamed, And snowbanks to shovel, and coal to be brought, And logs gotten out on the new building-spot.

And repairs to be done and old harness to mend, A granary to roof and events to attend. Before we are ready the winter slips by And spring once again bids us cropping to try.

November 16, 1934

November brings suspense from summer toil. Small recompense we get for risk and moil, But we are glad old Jupiter to foil. To market, now, the products of the soil.

January 25, 1935
Who likes fifty-five below?
Who likes drifted piles of snow?
Nobody.

Who likes January sleet?
Who likes slush along the street?
Who likes glare-ice under feet?
Nobody.

What shall we do about it then? Make the best of it.

February 8, 1935

Across the back of the Arctic night Glimmer the rays of the Northern light. Discerned at first as a faintling sheen, Darting and dancing their colors gleam.

May 3, 1935

The chirp of a robin, the honk of a goose,
Assure us the grip of old Winter is loose.

June 20, 1935

When it snows, snows, snows, snows, snows. Seems as if the ground would never get bare again.

When it rains, rains, rains, rains, rains, Seems as if 'twould never dry up again.

When it blows, blows, blows, blows, Seems as if 'twould never be calm again.

When it's dry, dry, dry, dry, dry, Seems as if it never would rain again.

But it does, it does, it does. Why worry?

October 4, 1935

Crisp morning, golden, winey afternoon, Gilt evening, summer passing much too soon.

January 31, 1936

The silent spruce in sparkling snow arrays
Her bending boughs throughout the passing days.
The forest robed in rime of fretted frost,
With silver brilliance glistens, gem-embossed.

February 7, 1936

Furtively facing the cutting north breeze, Shining too feebly through fog-laden skies, Out of the wraith of the Boreal night, Pales the noon sun in a grey spectral light.

February 14, 1936

The lazy windmill turns its tilted vanes In vocal protest as the winter wanes In cold, in storm, it fills the brimming tanks. The busy choreman offers it his thanks.

March 6, 1936

As out towards the Rocky peaks we look Mirage portends approach of soft Chinook.

March 20, 1936

Time marches on! The racing years
Bring age and then long rest.
The purpose of it all escapes
Our ken. Let's do our best.

April 3, 1936

MERELY A TOUCH OF 'FLU His fevered skin was parched from scalp to sole, His head congested and his stomach sore.

A puck'ry feeling every membrane had, Nor perspiration oozed from any pore.

He lay and tossed and coughed and blew his nose, Too sick to sleep. The minutes lagged along. How time can drag when illness dogs the night! How tarries Morpheus with a slumber song!

At last a start of sweating raised the hope Of fever's passing. Presently it eased. But still the chills and burning chased themselves Throughout his aching limbs, until at last it broke.

He tells his tale to sympathizing friends As though the hero of a keen ordeal. Are they impressed? Not quite as he had thought. Says one, "You've never had a sickness real."

April 24, 1936

Reluctant spring in winter's lap has tarried; Impatient men with anxious fears are harried. Experience bids us lay aside our worry; Anxiety contributes naught to hurry.

Yet not in dalliance nor idle toying, Fill up the days, with fruitful work employing The "unforgiving minute", swiftly fleeting. Prepare for Opportunity's sure greeting.

June 4, 1936
Blow hot, blow cold,
Perspire or freeze,
Doth summer hold
Just tricks like these?

June 26, 1936

When the ground shows grey and arid 'twixt the rows of wilting grain,

How good it feels to listen to the dashing of the rain; The booming of the thunder and the flashing of the bolt; The booming, flashing, splashing give the farmer renewed hope.

October 16, 1936

Silvery tissues of cobweb, over the fallow land spun, Carry the eye on a filmy path into the morning sun.

November 6, 1936

The laden spruce, with drooping arms encrusted, Stands sturdily, defying cold and storm.

July 16, 1937

The arid earth was baking in the sun;
The grass was drying on its stems; the grain
Was bleaching; farmers' hopes were done;
When lo! the miracle of dripping rain!
The crops change color like a maiden's blush;
The steaming earth is fragrant, soft and warm;
The lawns, the gardens, pastures all seem lush;
The wat'ry clouds our fears of drouth disarm.

August 6, 1937

The tearing wind, the searing drought, The frost, the hail, in turn about --It seems that man was made to strive To make him strong, alert, alive.

September 17, 1937

The beauty of the autumn and the splendor of the dawn, The gold upon the hillsides and the dew upon the lawn, The mellow tints of ripeness and the azure of the days, The winey, heady incense is a memory that stays.

September 24, 1937

THE SEASON'S TIDE

What joy to glimpse the dark'ning fields in spring!
What treat to see them tinged with blade of green!
A field in shotblade is a lovely thing
Whose eye indiff'rent to its morning sheen?

The harvest beckons; out the binder goes.

The prostrate bundles sprawl across the field,
Then stud the stubble with their serried rows.

The grower speculates upon the yield.

The thresher comes, pulsating with its power;
Good man and housewife hustle at their task;
The season's outcome hangs upon the hour;
This not the time for anyone to bask.

The bundle wagon clears a path too wide;
Drought, frost and wind have taken each its toll.
Such pigmy straw-piles dot the countryside!
Few trucks of grain along the highway roll.

The farmer gives his garden now a turn,
While cattle glean the heads of oats and wheat,
Repairs his fences; doth his screenings burn,
'Till blackn'ning fields again the vision greet.

October 8, 1937

Bath of gold on the hillside,

Regal tints on the plain.

October 15, 1937
When the yellows change to orange,
Etched with brown and splashed with crimson,
Then the rich, ripe tints of autumn,
Mark the turning of the year.

November 19, 1937

Wraith of fog in the valley, Flurry of snow on the plain, Freckle of white in the forest, Fresco of frost on the plain.

December 3, 1937

It comes, it comes; the week rolls round; The day for Timely Hints arrives. What can of help or cheer be found To lighten work and brighten lives?

December 10, 1937

The Fairy Frost her fume in fancy forms – A feath'ry fantasy of fretted twigs.

December 24, 1937

Swift roll the years, and fast the seasons fly; Time surges on but Life is born to die. Yet does it die? Doth not in all our lives An influence dwell – a spirit that survives?

December 31, 1937

Keen air and whirls of driving snow; Grey skies and thirty-five below --Short days, long evenings, cheerio! A time for blazing fires and radio!

January 13, 1938

What wheat to sow?

What crops to grow?

To fertilize,

To hybridize,

To advertise,

Or realize

It's mostly wise

To stabilize?

January 27, 1938

The sinking sun illumes the northern night With pallid brilliancy of cold white light. When morning breaks the rising sun is flanked By sundogs. Presently the sky is banked With storm clouds, while a sifting snow Descends upon us as the West winds blow.

'Tis winter in the North. A climate clean Bids all to meet its challenge strong and keen. Who meet it grow in courage and in vim; A rugged clime breeds spirit and makes men.

September 22, 1938

September days, September rays, Steptember haze, September blaze Of flanking leaves On forest trees. By gardens gay Let Summer say With ardent zest My last is best.

October 6, 1938

Though the frost has left its blemish And the countryside is sere, There is cadence, quiet, beauty In the turning of the year.

November 17, 1938

Autumn did its best to make amends for summer dryness; Winter gently settles on the land. Laws of compensation ever operate to soften Nature's harsher moods. Things might be worse.

November 24, 1938

Mother Earth with fleecy blanket

Tucks her sleeping plants to rest,

Snug beneath a snowy cover

Holds them warmly to her breast.

December 8, 1938

What Timely Hints doth now the season prompt?

What fact is new? what doth experience point?

December 29, 1938

A cold grey fog lies close upon the ground;
The heavy air almost suppresses sound.
'Tis winter in the North - a time for rest
And books and radio and fireside jest.

June 22, 1939

We plant in hope and pray the rains may fall.

We hear the wind and watch the drifting pall.

We see the greedy cutworms ravish all.

It takes great faith but let us still "play ball."

July 6, 1939
With cutworm pest abating
And hoppers needing baiting,
The husbandman is waiting
To see what happens next.

July 13, 1939

Beetles, bugs and hoppers;

Parasites and weeds;

Plant and beast diseases;

Fertilizers, feeds!

Simple job is farming,

City cousins think;

But whene'er they try it,

Wallets quickly shrink.

March 28, 1940

In boyhood days the "garden sass" Seemed just about like so much grass. Good solid food was what we sought, Nor cared to see the salad brought.

We didn't know that "vitameens"
Were carried in those precious greens;
That minerals like iron and lime
Were stored within them every time.

But now a garden doth appeal To farmer folk with greater zeal. If Popeye fights on spinach, why, Perhaps we, too, could, you and I.

April 25, 1940
The budding trees,
The busy bees,
The farmer sees
His sodden leas.

June 27, 1940

Men drop their work in factory and farm
To heed the call of Liberty's alarm.
The Tyrant threatens! Will the Freeman fail?
Not if he knows the need till Tyrant quail.

August 29, 1940

No bombs have dropped on our devoted heads.
We ply our duties every day unharmed.
How fortunate! By day and in our beds,
The siren has not yet our rest alarmed.

September 12, 1940

Caragana leaves turn russet; Saskatoon is flushing crimson; Balm of Gilead is orange; Aspen bluffs are lemon-yellow,

Warp and woof of spruce and poplar Weave the hillsides in mosaic. Autumn brings a color pageant Rich and ripe and truly golden.

September 19, 1940

However black the night, it pays to trust;
However dark the day, it helps to smile.
Whate'er the turn of battle, still we must
Not lose our heart. Keep cheerful all the while.

October 10, 1940

Yellow the stubble where threshers have cleared it; Large loom the turreted piles of fresh straw. Golden the haze of the afternoon sunlight; Fragrant the incense of autumn. Hurrah!

November 20, 1941

Ravished by mice in their legions, Rummaged by bears seeking these, Gobbled by ducks in the thousands, Guzzled by rabbits and geese,

Blistered by heat in midsummer, Sprouted by rains in the fall, Wading the mud in our gumboots, We yet thresh a crop after all.

December 15, 1941

The sunshine glistens on a peaceful world,
Though not a world at peace.
We shall be tested in the crucible,
Ere blazing guns may cease.

Hope pins its faith upon a better day, In courage, born of faith, Democracy is girded for the fray War's terrors to erase

May 21, 1942

Sing a song of springtime, Bird notes in the air, Every prospect pleases, Every landscape fair.

July 2, 1943

Sheen of the meadows and green of the trees; Bright summer sunshine with blossoms and bees.

September 3, 1943

THE ANXIOUS TIME

It is the anxious time of ripening yields, And busy binders buzzing in the fields, And cloudy skies, with threat of frost at eve, Each frost-free night another day's reprieve.

It's still the anxious time of threshing tide; The serried rows of stooks stand side by side; The separator stays its humming tune; September brings the rain withheld in June.

October 1, 1943

SONG OF SEPTEMBER

Did you see the rusty yellow turn to orange and to henna

Ere the gusty gales of autumn swept the leaves from saskatoon?

Did you see the western hillside clothed in sunset glow resplendent,

As the shades of eve descended on the golden afternoon?

Did you note the mellow fragrance of the autumn fruits and flowers

Ere the black'ning hand of winter put a period to the bloom?

Did you revel in the stubble of the summer's wheaten harvest

Where the threshers swept the acres as a reaper with a broom?

Did you see the grouse and pheasant flit about in search of gleanings

Where the lavish hand of man had spread a banquet for the birds?

Then you know and sense the pleasure of the season's fleeting fancy –

Sights and cadence of September are a theme for poet's words.

October 22, 1943

Whate'er the price of barley be Britain still needs bacon.

October 29, 1943

ALL SET FOR WINTER

The garden stuff is gathered; The carrots and tomatoes,

The cabbage and potatoes Are safe in bin and jar.

The threshing is completed, The stock is on the stubble; The farmer's "off the double". All's set to win the war.

November 5, 1943

October nights grow slowly cold and dark; November brings the coyote's eerie bark.

April 6, 1944

PUT VICTORY FIRST

They give their lives, unflinching, young and brave; Let's back them with the dollars we can save. The most we do is pitifully small Compared with what they do who risk their all

They fight for Freedom; we for Freedom save. Put Victory first o'er tyrants who enslave. Our cheers be hollow to the boys beyond Unless we pledge ourselves to buy a Bond.

April 13, 1944

Watch the dust-clouds; watch the rills, Taking richness from the hills.

April 20, 1944

THE WILLING BOND BUYER

Do not be a shier; Be a willing buyer; Go to the salesman before he gets to you.

Spare his car a mile; That will make him smile; Save him time and travel; show your heart is true.

April 27, 1944

SPRING

Green leaves bedeck the boughs of poplar trees; Green grass protrudes in last year's ragged leas; Dust clouds attend the tractor 'cross the fields; The driver speculates upon the yields.

May 18, 1944

The saskatoon is blooming in the hedges; The apple buds are blushing on the trees; The apricot and almond paint their bushes; Ten thousand blooms invite the bees.

It is good to blacken prairie land and fit it for the drill;
It is good to found a homestead where the buffalo roamed
at will;
It is good to see the cattle graze in herds upon the hill;

It is good to see the cattle graze in heras upon the hill; It is good to watch a sunset when the evening air is still.

DRY RAIN

Walking daily in the rain, In Vancouver once again, Where bareheaded men abstain From umbrellas, and disdain Coat and rubbers in the rain.

Where a man will buy a hat, Suit of clothes or silk cravat, Walk out, quite unmindful that Skies are dripping, heedless what Rain may do to that new hat.

And Milady, too, is shy Of protection from the sky; Carries her umbrella high; Smiles at kiddies passing by, Laughing at the pouring sky.

Seeing which, who can deny That Vancouver rain is dry.

In allusion to the story of the Albertan who admitted that it got cold on the Prairies but it was a dry cold and you didn't feel it; of a Californian who acknowledged heat but it was a dry heat and you didn't feel it; and of a British Columbian who conceded that it rained much of the winter at the Coast but it was a dry rain and you didn't mind it.

PATRIOTIC MESSAGES

SPEED THE VICTORY

They did not let us down. They gave their lives.
They left their parents, children, sweethearts, wives.
'Twas not an easy thing to say good-bye
To dare Death over sea and earth and sky.

Shall we be worthy of the gift they gave? Then we to help should gladly work and save, Forgetting self, match them in chivalry, Back the Attack and Speed the Victory.

LEND HIM THE WEAPONS

He has only one life to give; He gives it that we may live. We only are asked to lend, The weapons of battle to send.

Shall we pocket our hoard and deny him The cannon, the tank and the plane? A curse on our gold if we fail him, And he offer his courage in vain.

All we've gained is at stake in the struggle, All we have is our soldiers' to use; All we do is but little for freedom. What is anything worth if we lose?

CHRISTMAS GREEETINGS, 1928-1945 (Unfortunately, there are a number of blanks in this series.)

Here's Christmas Eve at Beaverlodge a year ago to-day; To you we send a Yuletide thought and speed it merrily.

From our little grey home in the West
We send wishes for all that is best.
Be your Christmas with merriment blest,
And the New Year with happiness prest.

While full be the larder and laden the board,
While rich be the raiment and ample the hoard,
May the Spirit of Christmas Day prevail,
For kindness and thoughtfulness ever are cheering;
The face of a friend is a welcome appearing;
The aladness of childhood be thine.

The seasons come, the seasons go,
The summer sun, the winter snow;
As swift rolls round each Christmas tide,
May ere with you its joys abide.

From the plains of the Peace to our friends far and near, We wish merriment, happiness, joy and good cheer; To kin and acquaintance the hope is sincere For a rollicking Christmas and Happy New Year. 1937

In warring world, two nations dwell in peace.
They willed long since their battle drums should cease.
May yet we see the clouds of trouble flee
Till Prince of Peace shall rule from sea to sea.

1938

O Christ, who died that millions might be saved, Who from the Temple, money-changers flayed, Grant that our faith and strength may never cease; By cross of war, we win the crown of peace. 1934

1935

1936

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS - (Cont'd)

Grant, too, that peace when 'tis at last attained May not by any taint of lust be stained, But that in simple, understanding grace We vanquish wrong, and cause of strife erase. For thus the love of Him who bore the cross Shall e'er prevail; to gain commute all loss.

And so again, with earnestness and cheer, A Merry Christmas and a glad New Year.

1939

1940

December gently blew a rimy breath,
And feath'ry phantasy of white did weave,
Ethereal beauty every bush endowed;
And knit a fairy gown for Christmas Eve.
Next day King Sol rode through a cloudless sky;
Bedecked the gown with diamonds, dazzling-bright.
All Christmas celestial beauty reigned.
The moon, resplendent, rode through jewelled night.

PAX VOBISCUM

A world is crucified upon a crooked cross.

Why must we quaff again the bitter cup?

A fast-forgetting world, unheeding others' loss,

Must drink the dregs, nor pass the potion up.

Forsooth, the nations lost their sense of chivalry,
Forgot to serve, and followed each its whim.
To Christ the Victory of old on Calvary;
To us the triumph if we follow him.

1941

THEIR CROSS, THEIR CROWN

As Christmas time draws near, we think of one, Whose chair is vacant still but in our hearts Who holds a hallowed place, and always will.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS - (Cont'd)

So many men have answered Duty's call, As Jesus did, Who said, "They will be done."

The pathos and the tragedy of war appal; Yet as the Cross gave Victory over Death, So theirs will live, a noble sacrifice. The humblest man, alike the rich and great, In giving life, gives all.

May theirs, like his example daily, then
Inspire and comfort in this Christmastide,
That we, without reserve, should consecrate
Our lives to God, unselfishly to help
To bring to pass, "Peace on earth, Goodwill toward men."
1942

THE HOPE OF LASTING PEACE

The tocsin of Victory rings in our ears; We'll welcome the close of the war-weary years But triumph be vain if we only prevail O'er the arms of the foe, and his cities assail.

The message of Christ was a gospel of love, Of honesty, purity, service, above All vengeance and hatred and passion and pelf; Stressed service to all – not just seeking for self.

In peace as in warfare, this gospel is still The light of the world, and, if practised, it will Solve problems of state, reconstruction ensure, And fashion a peace that will really endure.

For peace is a spirit that's born in the soul, No treaty can make it, no law can control. In facing our faults, we grow clearer in sight, And quicker to challenge the Wrong for the Right

1944

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS - (Cont'd)

With keen regret, we've left the fertile Peace, From winter cold and snow to seek release. Yet still our hearts abide; and Christmas sends An ardent wish to many thousand friends.

A world at peace but not a peaceful world!
The victors strive before their flags are furled.
So will it be until we learn to live
As Christ, who'd naught to claim but all to give.
Haney, B.C. 1945

THE POETRY OF ACHIEVEMENT

(The completion of a year's work on the homestead in the Peace River has given the inspiration for this article. Every farmer will appreciate the spirit of it. The year was 1914, the author's first in the Peace River Country.)

Every man is a poet and his life work a compositie epic. Some express themselves in language, but the great majority of us reveal our characters in what we accomplish with our hands in some form of tangible achievement. As Wolfe expired on the Plains of Abraham he breathed the purpose of his solider's career in those undying words, "Now, God be praised, I die happy." The fate of a continent had been sealed. It was the supreme climax, the opus magnum of his life.

The essence of a poem is not its form, its rhyme or rhythm, but the mood, the concept or vision which inspired it. Among the stateliest poems in print are the Psalms of David, which do not even take the form of stanzas. But they are paeans of praise, poems of incomparable rank. Composed chiefly upon the occasion of critical epochs in the author's life, they breathe the main-spring impulses and motives of his being; rejoicing and gratitude and trust and faith.

"Praise the Lord with harp; sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings.

"Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise.
"For the word of the Lord is right, and all his works are
done in truth."

The Song of Solomon, the Book of Job and all the rest of the Bible, indeed, for that matter, all the literary product of the ages, whether phrased, in verse or paragraph, are poems – the interpretation of an impulse, mood, thought, vision, or perhaps a passion for collaboration or research. Some of the most exquisite poetry occurs in the form of prose. The most prosaic worker is something of a poet. Whether conscious of it or not, there is alive or latent within him

the Divine spark of inspiration which lifts him above the clod and enables him to feel and appreciate, even though he cannot in words of his own express the sublime mood which Byron voiced in that superb panegyric, "The Ocean":

"There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture in the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar.
I love not man the less, but Nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I steal
From all I may be or have been before,
To mingle with the Universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all conceal."

Who could fail to respond to the impassioned majesty of that stanza? Few could describe, but all must in some degree participate in the poet's exalted mood as he penned the inspired lines. The most prosaic among us has enough of the artistic temperament for that. It is possession of such artistic temperament rather than the ability to conjure with words, that entitles us to class ourselves with the poets; and who shall gainsay our right?

The soul of the poet dwells in us all. Happy the worker in whom the artistic sense is well developed, for to him no toil is drudgery. If lifts him above the clod. There is poetry in his work.

There is poety in Nature. There is poetry in all things. Life is invested with an interest beyond prosaic literalness. For him there are "sermons in stones, books in the running brooks, and good in everything."

Expression is a primal law of life. Use or lose is nature's proverbial motto. We grow by what we achieve. It is not so much the lecture the student absorbs as the essay he produces that develops capacity. The topical thought of this para graph was approached from another angle in a lecture delivered some years ago by Sir John Willison before an Ontario audience of newspaper men. "The root motive," he explained, "that lures us into journalism is the public spirt that was born within us and that will not be denied expression." There you have it, the instinctive longing of the mind to express itself. This law of expression applies to the physical also. The muscles of the athlete tingle with the impulse for action. "Rejoicing as a strong man to run a race." The spiritual instinct finds expression in worship and various forms of religious exercise. Religion that is not practised dies. We are enriched by what we produce and give out. The penalty of withholding our faculties is atrophy. Wherefore, as the preacher says, it is well for a man to rejoice in his work - to realize an artistic satisfaction in the product of hand or brain. It is his portion. More, it is a law of being, neglected to his inestimable loss.

Forms of expression are manifold as the faculties and impulses of which they are representation. Few of us can express ourselves adequately in words. Even Byron, with all his gift of rhetoric could not begin to voice the mood he experienced while contemplating the resistless power of the ocean. Happily, it is open to all of us to reveal ourselves by some avenue of concrete achievement. The painter represents ideals in pictures, the sculptor in statuary, the musician in chords. In any case the mechanical execution of the work should be the smaller element in its value. The concept is the greater part. Yet here, we must not overlook the fact that the artist will be revealed not alone in the conception but as well in the degree of thoroughness

and pains and skill with which it is conveyed. In every simple act or course of conduct in life characteristics are liable to be exemplified. Thoroughness and integrity in a factory hand are shown in his unwillingness to slight any detail. The farmer writes his character upon the land, even as he did in the days of Solomon:

"I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man devoid of understanding;

"And lo, it was all grown over with thorns and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.

"Then I saw, and considered it well; I looked upon it and received instruction.

"Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep.

"So shall thy poverty come upon thee as one that travelleth and thy want as an armed man."

Do you see a farm where every fence and furrow is straight, where all the buildings are trim and neat, where every implement is sheltered, where all the work is well and precisely done? A thorough-going man is responsible for that place. "Good enough" is never good enough for him. Every task must be performed just right. It is the character of the man. A neighbor is differently constituted. Expansion is his ideal. His acres are many and his fields wide. His ambition is to achieve on a large scale, whether well or otherwise. It is the character of the man. Enterprise is denoted on the next farm by modern buildings and facilities, up-to-date equipment and general evidence of the newest and best ideas. Enterprise is a predominant characteristic of this man, as painstaking thoroughness is of the first. Passing on, you note a homestead where livestock is the outstanding feature. Horses or cattle and perhaps sheep and swine of high class, whether registered or grade, are bred here and the owner's

chief pleasure as well as pecuniary interest is in the moulding of animal forms. The set of a horse's hock or the spring of a steer's rib is a thing of beauty to him. With an artist's eye, he takes in the ensemble of each individual in his stud, herd or flock. To him the breeding of livestock is invested with as much true artistic pleasure as painting could be to a Rembrandt or music to a Beethoven. He is as much an artist as they. A near-perfect gelding, heifer or sheep is to him a poem.

A boy toiled in a garden. It was an exceptional boy and exceptional garden for the one took a pride in the other. He had planted with circumspection and tended with diligence. From causes beyond his control, weeds had temporarily got the better of him, but he was waging battle successfully with scuffler, rake and hoe. Completing his task, he stood up and surveyed it. The loose brown, moisture-retaining soil mulch offered a perfect bed for plants to grow in. Every row was straight and neat; every space was clean. The rows all ended evenly, forming a true rectangle. The space within the garden fence was clean as the planted area. Not a stroke had been spared. The task was perfectly performed. The desire of his heart had been accomplished. The lad's character had expressed itself. It was his psalm, his poem. He had made a song with a hoe.

A woman planned a home. Long had she dreamed of it, considered it and hoped for it. Many years had been spent in a plain, inconvenient domicile and all the while she longed for a house that would measure up to her ideal. It should be attractive though simple in its architectural lines. It should typify an idea of shelter and homeliness and rustic simplicity befitting its environment. Interiorly

it should be tasteful, convenient and suitable to the purpose of a simple home. So she planned and sketched, re-planned and sketched again, blending features she had seized upon here and there and working all into a harmonious order. With minute care she had considered every sink and cupboard, every line of plumbing, the stair-case, the walls, the ceilings, the picture-moldings, the location of registers and stoves, the doors, the windows, the verandas and all the rest. The finish of the woodwork was decided with a view to the ultimate scheme of decoration. Every detail was thought out with reference not only to its own desirability but with constant regard to the composite whole. The architect and workmen had upset some of the minor details, necessitating difficult rearrangements, which, however, had been mostly accomplished without seriously marring the harmony of the whole. The carefully-wrought ideal had been translated into tangible, visible form. Solid and simple it stood, beautiful of line and almost perfect of plan - of course, it was not quite perfect or this would not be a true recital. for no house is ever quite what the builder had thought or hoped, but it was as near that as houses are ever built. Strength, simplicity, beauty, taste, comfort, convenience had been economically secured. It was a triumph of homeplanning and building. The woman's ideal had materialized. It was her poem, her picture, her work of art. For her that home had infinitely more attraction than had it been built by another and she merely brought to it to live. The pride and loving interest of creation were hers. It was the child of her own ideal. Well and worthily she rejoiced in the work for it was really hers though she had not placed a brick.

A farmer stooked the last sheaf at the foot of his harvest field. Glancing back up the slope on which he had been laboring he experienced that intense thrill of satisfaction

which comes to the husbandman at the prospect of work well done and rewarded with a pleasing result. It was the crown, not of one year's labor but many. An average farm he had started with eight or ten years before. Average chances he had but he was not an average man. Wrapped up in his character was an innate ambition to excel. To this end he consistently planned, aiming to make each year's achievement a basis for further progress. Not always did he succeed for difficulties and discouragements beset him as they do everyone who undertakes to grapple with the stubborn problems of the field. Floods and drouth and hail came in their turn. Frost injured his corn. A horse died one year. A much-lauded new variety of grain he had adopted proved inferior to his old seed stock. Sickness and scarcity of help often upset his plans. New weeds and insects kept him alert. But these things were only to test his steadfastness and develop perseverance. With tenacity of purpose he had held evenly on his way, content to advance surely if somewhat slowly and irregularly toward his goal. In this he had exemplified one prominent trait of character which agriculture imperatively demands.

Now the reward had come. The season had been reasonably propitious. For certain laggards among his neighbors the rains had come too early and the dry weather too soon, but for him who was ready betimes, Nature had not been unkind. Careful comparison had decided the best varieties to plant. All his small grains had been fanned three times before sowing and drilled on rich, clean ground, carefully tiled or ditched to provide quick run-off and thus gain a day or more of precious time in spring seeding. The seed corn had been ear-tested and planted on well-manured clover sod, carefully plowed and worked down. The meadows had filled his mows to overflowing. His alfalfa field was carpeted with a thick mat of the season's second aftermath. Cattle were sleek,

teams hard and fit. Swine, sheep and poultry all told of thrift. Fall wheat, already threshed, had turned out nearly forty bushels per acre and here on the sweep of his oatfield, the capped stooks loomed thick, tall and dark on the dusk of the evening horizon. It was the best crop of oats he had ever grown and it looked good for over seventy bushels per acre. Stubble stood stout and continuous in every drill. There was hardly a trace of smut for the seed had been regularly treated with formaldehyde. Not a weed was in evidence for the land had been under a welltilled hoe crop the year before and had grown alfalfa for several years previous to that. So this bumper crop of oats was no mere luck. It was the culmination of years of good farming calculated to produce just such results. "There is considerable chance in farming but after all," mused the husbandman, "good management finally outweighs chance."

"That's why I farm," he soliloquized further. "Money is not the main attraction, though we do like to feel there is profit in our work. But the satisfaction I get out of the crop is far beyond the sense of gain. I believe I would rather raise a crop of grain like that than to win a Waterloo."

It was his Waterloo. The character of a purposeful man had expressed itself in achievement. He had made a poem and his heart was glad.

In his daughter's autograph album on her wedding day.

In bidding you godspeed upon
The matrimonial sea,
I wish you not all halcyon days,
Since that can hardly be;

But that when storms beset the bark, You meet them nobly and That love may ever guide the course Unto a peaceful strand.

DADDY'S LITTLE "BOTHER BOY" (unfinished)

Jolly little "bother", cheery little chap Thinks it's fine to cuddle on his daddy's lap, Chubby fists and pug-nose, dimpled cheeks and chin, Brown eyes twinkle brightly when his Dad comes in.

In the early morning when the house is cold, Comes a stirring murmur, "Boy" begins to scold. Daddy knows the meaning; bottle-time is up, With a spell of waiting o'er the lamp-rack cup.

See the shadows on the wall; See the shadows rise and fall As the bouncing baby boy Titillates in care-free joy.

HE GAVE HIS LIFE FOR FREEDOM

(A tribute to the memory of his son, Flight Sergeant Frederick Bruce Albright, 1914-1942, whose plane was shot down over Belgium on the return flight from the first 1000-plane raid over Essen.)

In faith and hope and pride, we reared a boy. No early lap of luxury did he enjoy. In simple frontier home one stormy morn, Long ere the doctor came, the babe was born.

Tumultuous nature surged within his breast, A war-year's child bequeathed at Mars' request, But as he dangled on his grandsire's knee, Who would have thought two global wars to see?

He lived his baby days through one, when very young, Reserved of mien and slow to find his tongue; But when he did and felt the urge to talk Words poured in torrents long after he could walk.

A farmer boy, he toddled through the field, And tagged the binder, garnering the yield Of golden grain, as most boys do who can, Earnest and true – a sturdy little man.

A stormy petrol was his guiding star;
It seemed as if Fate marked him from afar.
What time he froze his ears like cauliflower,
What time the post-maul left a life-long scar,
What time he fell adown a stack of hay,
And landed on his head – enough, I'd say,
To break his neck – nor cried for pain,
Rose up and quiet, walked away again.

He grew to manhood, chivalrous and brave, A welcher never; self he'd never save. He had his faults, of course, as all men must, Headstrong, unsparing, sometimes hardly just.

HE GAVE HIS LIFE FOR FREEDOM - (Cont'd)

And yet, a favorite, generous and beloved, He made a host of friends where'er he roved.

When war broke out, he was in Monkman Pass; His heart was in the hills. The drums, alas! Disrupted all his plans. He heard the call Of duty, and promptly offered all.

He did not want to fight. 'Twas not his aim To kill his fellowman nor children maim. But when world bandits go on wild rampage, Free men must die to succor youth and age.

"So nigh is grandeur to the dust, So near is God to Man, When duty whispers, "Lo, thou must,"

The youth replies, "I can."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

AN UNFINISHED POEM BY FLT. SGT. F.B. ALBRIGHT

Between Peace River and the sea, the Rocky mountains stand, Shutting out prosperity from this broad and fertile land, A range of mountains grim and cold, yet awe-inspiring, grand.

Their snow-capped peaks in majesty tower upwards to the sky, Hemming us in from rim to rim, the hand of man defy.

From the banks of the Red River where the buffalo used to roam,

Forever searching, seeking for a place he might call home, Came a man called Alex. Monkman to the shores of Saskatoon.

He built himself a bivouac on the Lake's most southern shore, And there resolved to make his home in peace forever more.

First turned he his hand to trading, then farming claim his time.

And spare time he spent in hunting, and followed his trapline.

And so the passing of the years brought him security.
But his gaze turned ever westward to the land beside the sea,
For to him the Rocky Mountains seemed to breath of mystery.

After the work was over in the spring of 'Twenty-two, He turned his footsteps westward to to hills of azure blue. Through streams and over muskegs led his solitary way, Up hills, across green valleys rich with vetch and red-top hay, And nearer grew the mountains with the passing of each day.

And so our doughty wanderer his lonely way did make, Pausing but briefly now and then a scanty rest to take, Till suddenly he came upon the shores of Stoney Lake, An emerald gem among the hills that rose on every side Reflecting back their image clear beneath its bosom wide.

AN UNFINISHED POEM - (Cont'd)

But ever he pressed onward to the grim, forbidding peaks, Through spruce and jack-pine forests beside the mountain creeks.

He scaled a ridge and far below saw one of Nature's freaks,

A sight that spurred him onward upon his lonely quest, Contrary Kinuseo flowing gently toward the West.

Straight down a valley broad and wide between majestic hills,

Meandered Kinuseo Creek in little ebbs and rills.

It beckoned to the wanderer who, for reply, made haste
To follow down its winding course past Baldy's rugged face
Till it turned northward on its course to join the mighty
Peace.

But on he pressed toward the west, still searching for his goal,

Past many an alder thicket and jackpine-studded knoll,
Till presently he came into the beautiful Green Bowl -A little pocket in the hills, a lake so crystal clear,
Where down to drink around its brink came many moose and
deer.

He crossed a marshy meadow wide in answer to the call. The trail led on across a ridge through giant timber tall; When all at once, he heard a roar, a mighty waterfall. The Murray River whirled along at swift increasing pace, And gath'ring for the awful leap, plunged downward into space.

In awe, he stood upon the bank above the deep abyss, And watched the teeming waters fall with angry roar and hiss. Two hundred feet into the gorge the foaming torrent fell. It held the watcher on the brink as if by magic spell, Until in silence, turned he back in awed and mute farewell.

AN UNFINISHED POEM - (Cont'd)

For miles that day he made his way upon a southward course Toward the towering mountains and the mighty Murray's source;

And as the sun sank to the west it's night of rest to seek
The traveller paused upon his way 'neath Castle Mountain's
peak

Where Murray's slate grey waters join the green of Monkman Creek.

SONS OF THE AIR

(Written in February, 1941, by Esther Hobden, a young niece of W. D. Albright, with her cousin, Flt. Sgt. F. B. Albright particularly in mind.)

The din of battle rages loud and long; The weary world waits for the victor's song. The air is filled with planes of greyish hue, And in them sit the lads with coats of blue.

Day after day unceasingly they fight, The monster's sly and cunning tricks to blight; Throughout the long night watches hearts so loyal Protect and keep the Empire's sacred soil.

These are the lads who sacrifice their lives, Who leave their homes, their sweethearts and their wives, And in face of danger never turn to flee But fight with all their might for you and me.

Our Union Jack shall always be unfurled From many lofty heights from which were hurled Our enemies in days of long ago; Red, white and blue shall never be hung low.

To you we pledge our gratitude and love, And as the roar of planes is heard above, Our prayers for you and your well-being rise To God above who rules the earth and skies.